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September 24, 1958

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

Participants: Mr. Leishman, British Embassy; Messrs Freers and Toon.

Subject: UK amendments to working group draft replies to Soviet note of September 18 and FEDREP Aide Memoire Sept. 9.

We made the following comments on the UK suggested amendments, attached:

A. Reply to Soviet note of September 18.

1. No objection.
2. No objection, but we suggested replacing "notes" with "observes". (Leishman concurred with this change.)
3. We expressed our view to Leishman that we feel it is important to retain this sentence because it doesn't actually duplicate the thoughts expressed in the first part of the paragraph and furthermore, it serves as a useful rejoinder to the expression of concern for the wishes of the German people which were repeatedly mentioned in the Soviet note of September 18. (Leishman subsequently reported the UK Foreign Office's agreement to retain this sentence in the draft.)
4. We informed Leishman that we would have no objection to deletion of the sentence referring to the 1945 agreement, although we pointed out that since it was the French who had originally proposed its inclusion, we should await Quai d'Orsay reaction. If the French agree to delete, then we would also.
5. With regard to the Foreign Office's suggestion that we add to the draft reply the original UK wording on German participation, we told Leishman our judgment on this point would be guided primarily by the attitude of the FEDREP. We tended to agree with the French position previously expressed in a working group meeting that including the British sentence on participation might create the impression the Western powers were prepared to approach the German problem on a new basis. We felt that the British wording could be misinterpreted in certain West German circles whose thinking appears to be a bit fuzzy on the question of FEDREP-GDR direct talks. We would prefer, therefore, to retain the draft reply as is. If the British should choose to do so we would, of course, have no objection to their suggesting in the quadripartite discussions in Bonn the inclusion of a

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sentence on German participation. If the FEDREP should feel that this would be useful to them, then of course we would probably not oppose its inclusion. On this point also the French reaction is important since the French had expressed particularly strong views against mentioning the question of German participation in the note to the Soviets. (Leishman subsequently reported that the UK Foreign Office appreciated the US position but continued to favor inclusion of the sentence in the draft reply; he did say, however, that the US informal suggestion as to quadripartite discussion of the point would probably be acceptable to the Foreign Office since it agrees that the FEDREP opinion is controlling. Leishman had personally suggested that to meet part of the French objection, the sentence should be revised to read "Participation could be decided by the Four-Powers represented on the group". The UK Foreign Office had approved Leishman's personal revision to meet the French position.)

6. We would be prepared to add a sentence to the draft advising the Soviet Government of Western notification to the FEDREP of the terms of the Western reply, if the French approved.

B. Draft reply to the FEDREP Aide Memoire of September 9.

We informed Leishman we would have no objection to the changes suggested by the UK Foreign Office provided the French concurred that both replies should be sent simultaneously.

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UK AMENDMENTS TO DRAFT REPLY TO THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT

1. Paragraph 1, 3rd sentence:

Insert "unanimous" before "resolution", and for "and endorsed" read "which was endorsed."

2. Paragraph 1:

Amend last sentence to read: "The US Government notes that, instead, the Soviet Note is based on proposals made by the so-called 'Government of the German Democratic Republic'."

3. Paragraph 5.

Omit last sentence.

4. Paragraph 6.

Omit first sentence. The second sentence would read: "In the Directive issued by the four Heads of Government at Geneva in 1955 the Soviet Government recognized its responsibility" In the next two sentences the words "responsibilities" would be in the singular.

5. Paragraph 8.

Insert new last sentence as follows:- "If it were agreed to set up such a group, the question of appropriate German participation could be decided by representatives of the four powers on the group."

6. Paragraph 10.

Insert new last sentence as follows:- "The US Government is also informing the Federal Government of the terms of this Note."

UK AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAFT REPLY TO THE FEDERAL GOVT.

1. In the penultimate sentence the word "should" should be "would".
2. In the last sentence the words "intend to inform" should be changed to "is informing" and the words "to urge" should be changed to "urging".

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